

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: March 10, 2016

Agenda Item: Keep Cool Hills Management Biennial Agreement

Division/Bureau: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Min

Background

This proposal would extend for two years, through F&W Commission rule, a 15,000-acre cooperative management area north of Lincoln that was established by Commission rule in 2007. Sieben Ranch Company owns most of the land, with some parcels owned by the Montana Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. A portion is State Land, administered by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. The cooperative management area rules would provide for managed public access throughout the year. Prior to 2006, unmanaged public access resulted in significant resource damage to lands in this area, causing affected landowners to consider closing the area to public access.

Public Involvement Process & Results

- **January 2016 – February 2016**—Draft rule was approved for public comment at the January 14th Commission meeting. During the public comment period, a total of two people offered comments. Both people commented in support of the proposed rule.

Alternatives and Analysis

Without adoption of this proposal, Sieben Ranch Company may close lands under its control to public access. DRNC and TNC lands are already subject to the management rules included in this proposal.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP proposes the Commission approve this proposed rule. Managed public access will reduce resource damage which has previously occurred, while allowing FWP to work in partnership with the landowners to provide a significant amount managed public recreational access to high quality lands.

Proposed Motion

I move that the Commission approve the Keep Cool Hills Hunting Access and Recreation Management Area Biennial Rule.